

May '96

Volume X No V



MagiCurrents

HONEST
SID
GERHART

MAGIC CONVENTION REPORT

DESERT MAGIC SEMINAR

XIX

by Rick Waterhouse

Desert Magic Seminar XIX opened with a nice mixer on Wednesday April 10, 1996. Plenty of good food (as opposed to last year) a plenty of opportunity to socialize and people watch. Both socials, the arrival and the farewell, were successful, but the music was a touch loud for most people's taste. If you were unable to attend, the following should be almost as good as being there

LECTURES

Steve Fearson, Karrell Fox's all star teach-in, Eugene Burger, Carl Cloutier, Jay Sankey, Gary Kurtz, Gary Ouellet, Max Maven, and Doc Albo. In addition to these lectures, there was a panel discussion by Eugene Burger, Robert Neal, and Steven Minch on the subject of Magic and Meaning. In addition, there were a few "extra" events including workshops by Scotty York, Roger Klause and Paul Stone on corporate magic.

See Desert Magic page 6



I hear \$5. Do I
hear \$10, gimme
gimme a 10 ...
Going once. ...



APRIL

RING REPORT

Our new venue at the Francis Parker School was perfect for the annual *Ring 76* swap meeting and auction. Plenty of space, tables and room to move around. Six *Ring 76*'ers set up tables and Magic of all shape, size and type was swapped, traded or sold to the 25 members and guests present. Lots of books, magic and historical magic.

Our auction was jointly conducted by Dick Dale and Jeff Marcus. Each in their own right, brilliant Masters of Ceremonies.

see RING 76 in the Linking Ring

BOOK REVIEW

THE WAR MAGICIAN by Jim Jolly

It's been a few years since I did a book report and I certainly never wrote one voluntarily. A while back a friend of mine lent me a book he thought I'd like. After reading *The War Magician* by David Fisher I felt compelled to tell other magicians about this incredible true story.

In the early 16th century an English justice of the peace named John Maskelyne declared a mysterious stranger guilty of practicing black magic and banished him to the American plantations. Soon after this event, the Maskelyne farm failed and a mysterious black-clothed man was seen limping through

see WAR page 9

INSIDE

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|----|
| ① | Your First Magic Show | 2 |
| ② | Ask the Pro | 3 |
| ③ | Riffle Shuffle Stacking | 5 |
| ④ | 'Twilight Angels' Review..... | 6 |
| ⑤ | Magic on TV | 10 |

Preparing Your First Magic Show

by Greg Wauson

The real challenge in being asked to write an article for our newsletter is to choose the topic from so many that are possible. Instead of a video or book review this time, how about something different? Let's think about this... Ring 76 is made up of a few pros, a few semi-pros and a lot of folks who don't perform for money but just enjoy watching others and/or doing some tricks themselves. Yeah - that's the ticket! There may be some reading this who want to put together their first magic show, whether to entertain at their nephew's birthday party or for hire as a bona fide magician. Here are a few of my ideas of how to put together your first magic show. Let's focus on a performance for kids.

First, read as much as you can about doing magic for children. Samuel Patrick Smith and David Ginn are two of the best authors on kids' magic. You will pick up in their writings not only the how of certain effects but also the why. They will let you in on the real secret of entertaining kids. Are you ready? It's... humor. This doesn't mean you need to be a clown but kids love to laugh and they respond well to stuff that just looks funny, especially if one or more of them are involved. Smith and Ginn both put funny clothes on the kids and/or put the kids into ridiculous situations. If the kids are laughing (at the right time, that is), you're on your way to being a hit!

Next, decide on a few tricks which would appeal to the age of your audience and are within your skill level. There's no need to perform a difficult sleight-of-hand routine for your first show. Kids don't

see **FIRST MAGIC SHOW** on page 7

Scott's Thoughts

by Scott Wells,
A.I.M.C.



Still Working For Food

In my recent article entitled "*Will Perform For Food*," I alluded to the fact that nobody could be an expert in several fields. Specifically, I implied that no one could be a magician for trade shows, birthday parties, bars, outdoor festivals, cruises, corporate banquets, and profess to specialize in juggling, mentalism, escapes, clowning and every other form of the magic related arts and be highly successful in every form of venue. Just as there are general practitioners who are good for curing a plethora of problems, one would see a specialist if they need special attention. The general practitioner is successful, but the specialist is the one who makes the real money.

Shortly after that article appeared, a friend pointed out five things on his business card that he could do: 1) magic shows, 2) close-up and stage, 3) stilt walking, 4) comedy magic, and 5) balloon hats and animals. His point was that he does all of these things and does them well enough and frequently enough to earn a full time living. I agree that one can be, and indeed must be, proficient in many fields in order to be financially successful. Another magician handed me his card that same evening which proclaimed that he was a comedy magician, juggler and fire-eater. Moreover, his card listed concert opener, comedy clubs, private parties, cruise lines, TV commercials and Las Vegas showrooms. Although his card may sound jumbled, it really targeted a specific market

and what they could expect him to do for them.

In an effort to clarify the meaning of my earlier monograph, let's break down the division of magic and its related arts. At the risk of overlooking something or covering more than what you may consider "allied," I believe magic to include stage magic, close-up magic, and parlour/cabaret magic. I believe that this is in line with the thinking of the Academy of Magical Arts inasmuch as the Magic Castle has a performance room devoted to each of these areas. Each of these fields is broad enough to cover grand illusion, manipulation, live stock productions/evanishments, cards, coins, micro props, comedy, bizarre "magik", themed character acts, mentalism, escapes, and others that are unintentionally omitted. After identifying these "traditional" fields, we venture into the "allied" area that includes ventriloquism, juggling, clowning, quick change artistry, puppetry (i.e. Punch & Judy), balloon sculpting, and shadowgraphy.

Now let's break down the venues a bit. To be generic, we should include children's shows, private and corporate affairs, civic groups, nightclubs and showrooms, festivals and other public events and/or locations, and television. No doubt that I have again omitted something, but my purpose is not to be all inclusive but rather to cover the major areas. Venues for children's show entertainers include birthday parties, school assemblies, child care centers, and nearly any place where groups of children congregate (pizza parlors, theme parks, etc.). Private parties obviously allude to holiday, birthday, or other special occasions held in private homes for an intimate group of guests. Corporate affairs encompass a wide array of possibilities including trade shows, hospitality suites, award banquets,



product announcements, sales meetings, cocktail parties, conventions, and customer meetings. Civic groups refer to churches and professional/social clubs/organizations. Nightclubs and showrooms refer to comedy clubs and Las Vegas-type reviews (i.e. cruise ships). There are a multitude of festivals (indoors and out) all over the world that draw millions of people and employ magicians. Other public events/locations include concerts, museums, libraries, shopping malls, restaurants, and a multitude of other opportunities. Television and the cinema is more of a specialized field that takes more than just skill and "chutzpah" to break into and conquer.

I've gone into a bit more detail than I intended in an effort to emphasize the diversity of performing venues. For a more in-depth idea of where magicians can make money, I recommend reading The Success Book Volume Two by Magic, Inc. Although somewhat outdated, there are still quite a few gems in there. I stand by my previous admonition from my referenced article when I referred to one not being fully proficient enough to be successful in all of these areas. First of all, I believe that you must have a mastery and deeper-than-average level of understanding of several areas of magic before you can competently perform at any engagement for a professional fee. For example, a stage magician must have sleight of hand skills that may be surreptitiously employed during his performance. Likewise, the close-up and parlour magician must be knowledgeable of black art principles, deceptive devices (i.e. thin bases) and other methods employed by the stage magician. Secondly, do you think that the same person who receives your business card and books you for the Texas Chili Festival or their daughter's birthday party could

also be responsible for getting you work at Bally's Grand Casino or aboard a cruise ship? Of course it's possible, but not very probable. Thirdly, it would be difficult to easily slide into and out of character from a bar magician at night to a birthday clown by day. The audiences are completely different and must be treated so. Being a "jack-of-all-trades" does not necessarily equate to you being a "master-of-all-trades" in the mind of the person holding your business card.

I'm suggesting that you consider target marketing. First of all, identify what type of group that you prefer to entertain: children (pre-school to college), adults (young adults to nursing homes), and/or families. Then identify your preferred style: serious, comical, sophisticated, a little off-color, gospel, etc. Secondly, if you want to work outdoor festivals, cruise ships, bar mitzvahs, nursing homes, hospitality suites or any other unrelated venue, then customize your advertising and don't try to cover the globe with one advertising piece. Think about your market and who that potential employer might be. Is it the secretary of the country club, the banquet manager of the hotel, or simply the mother of the child wishing to engage the services of an entertainer for their child's birthday? One doesn't care about the other's needs so why waste their time. Finally, look at your advertising pieces. When was the last time that you had a professional photo taken and/or your advertising material updated? Are you still using the same outdated pieces because you have several left? According to Bob Brown (of "Bob and Brenda" fame) ten percent of your annual magic income should be invested in your advertising.

Let's turn to the first magician's card mentioned at the opening. A

See SCOTT page 5

ASK THE PRO



Curtis R. Clark

QUESTION: How do you handle the drunk or belligerent person?

CURTIS CLARK: There is no one clear cut answer to this because there are several different situations this falls into. The best answer is of course you don't handle them at all, you go on to the next table. However things are not always black & white.

If you are working a table and partway through the first or opening trick you discover the people have had quite a few drinks and are acting obnoxious, rowdy etc, finish up the trick and move on. I usually tell them I have a couple tables waiting for me and I will try to stop back and do some more for them later. Of course later never comes.

Sometimes you'll have a table of 5-6 people and only one of them is drunk. If you can work the other people and not use the drunk person for any of the effects you may get by. However if the one person is disrupting things for everyone else you're not going to get anywhere. Wrap up what you're doing or cut it short if needed and move on.

Belligerent people can be a little different. They are not drunk,

see CURTIS page 10



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(Thanks Herb)

From The Hat

One day I was performing before a group of people at a party and I was doing Stewart James' "Further Than That." In the effect you force the Ace of Spades. Then you have the deck "tell you what the card was" by riffing it by your ear. The trick then goes "further than that" and you spell A-C-E and S-P-A-D-E-S as you deal off the next 9 cards. The next card is the Ace of Spades. Of course the trick goes, "further than that" and the 3 aces and 2 thru 7 of spades previously dealt out are turned over. But the trick goes, you guessed it, "further than that" and you deal 4 more cards to the Ace of Spades to reveal a royal flush in spades. Since nothing goes, "further than that", you take your bow.

I've done the trick hundreds of times and it's a real crowd pleaser. But you really need to hit that force card right. My first clue should have been my wife Kelly's face when I was showing the "freely selected" card around the room and telling everyone to remember it. She knew it was supposed to be the Ace of Spades, but it wasn't. As I riffled the deck by my ear and said, "the deck is telling me you card was the ...Ace of Spades, correct?" When the crowd said no it was not the Ace...I looked at Kelly whose pained look told me this trick was over.

Great...this was supposed to be my closer. I said, "Well I guess the cards aren't telling the truth today...for my next trick..." I was thinking of a new closer when I heard one of the spectators ask another person, "What happened to the King of Diamonds?"

Inspiration took the place of perspiration and I grabbed a nearby cloth napkin. I spread through the

deck to "remove any jokers" and secretly culled the King of Diamonds to the top. I went into a *card through handkerchief* routine. The audience really thought I had blown the last effect, and I had, but when the missing King began to "push itself through the napkin" I could tell by the oohs and ahhs that the day (and my reputation) was saved. It was the most talked about effect I did that day.

I learned that day to nail that force card, watch my assistant's reactions, and be ready to go to Plan B if the unexpected occurs.

-Jim Jolly

PERFORMANCES AROUND TOWN

(The following is the best information available at press time, please call ahead to verify performers, times and days. These restaurants are not looking for magicians to perform. Please stop by to support the magicians working there.)

94 Aero Squadron (560-6771) for Sunday Brunch, **Keith Boudreau**, Memorable Magic

Corvette's Diner (542-1476) 3946 5th Ave, features **Magic Mike** since 1987 Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 6:30 to 9:30. Magic Mike says bring a deck of cards and he'll teach you a trick.

The Gathering - Curtis Clark performs Thursdays and Fridays from 7 to 10:30; **Terry Lunceford** performs Saturdays from 7 to 10:30 (they sometimes change days)

Rip Tides Brewery Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays, 5 to 8 p.m., **Curtis Clark**

Tid Bits (543-0300) 3838 5th Ave., various performers call for information

(Professional Courtesy: let the working magician perform at their restaurant, leave your tricks at home. Come and enjoy.)

SUPPORT MAGIC IN SAN DIEGO
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RIFFLE-SHUFFLE STACKING

Bob King

When watching others unsuccessfully attempt riffle-stacking, there is one common hindrance I have noticed. That is the first fingers bent and pressing down on each of the two half-decks, causing the cards to bend up and creating too much pressure to allow any control. The shuffle must be a light, airy one, and the way to accomplish this is to get in the habit of laying the first fingers flat onto the halves, instead of bending them.

1. Separate the halves for the shuffle and have their inner, short, ends touching. The second and third fingers of each hand reach over the cards and more or less steady the outer long sides. The first fingers lay FLAT on top of the cards as the thumbs lift up the inner sides. Your hands should not be closer to the inner short edges, but should be to the right and left of center.

2. As the thumbs lift their respective halves, the two packets will automatically angle slightly, with the inner corners of the short edges almost touching.

3. Now, with a light touch, allow the cards to drop, not spring, off the thumbs. You will see, when about half of each packet is shuffled, that the remaining cards will separate and it is an easy matter to count those left. Simply stop the dropping of cards in the half you are holding back from and let all the cards from the other half fall first.

As for being able to do this without looking, trust me, it can be done. I can only do it with four cards, because that's the number I practice with the most. I find that it's a combination of "feel" and timing. I'm sure that Darwin Ortiz can do it with any number; his dedication to practice amazes me as much as his skill.

Finally, I feel that the most important first-step toward mastering the riffle-stack is to train those first fingers to relax their death-grip on the cards, allowing you to affect a more relaxed and controlled shuffled.

(From Bob King — bkmagic@mail.frontiernet.net)

SCOTT from page 3

magician obviously performs shows. In this instance, he performs close-up, stage, and stand-up comedy magic. He is also a stilt walker and twists balloons. That's great; however, it could have been summed up with "comedy magic, stilt walking, and balloon artistry" just as the other magician's card succinctly says "comedy magic, juggler and fire-eater." Furthermore it fails to mention the venues where he prefers to perform. In particular, it would be helpful to mention outdoor festivals, store openings, and other public events. This helps lead the prospective buyer to know where the magician's services could best be utilized; however, you don't want to inundate the potential client with too much information even though you may be suitable for other venues. They will get the idea of how they can best employ your services from the sampling of related venues you suggest.

The second magician's card is specific as to what adult venues he is best suited (concert opener, comedy clubs, private parties, cruise lines, TV commercials and Las Vegas showrooms.) It's important to note that in this case, he appears to be targeting a specific, sophisticated, adult (and lucrative) market. They are all different yet all have the same thread of appeal. A person who would attend concerts or comedy clubs would be likely to go to Las Vegas or take a cruise and buy "high end" products that were influenced by watching TV commercials.

So, look at your talents and determine what you do best. Look at what you are saying to your potential employer with your advertising. Do they support one another or do they send confusing signals?

**Reach the San Diego
Magic Community**

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Board Report

The Board Meeting was postponed until Tuesday April 30, 7 p.m. at Rick Waterhouse's. Minutes from the Board Meeting will appear in next month's *MagiCurrents*.

NEW & RENEWED MEMBERS APRIL 1996

The following are the Ring 76 members who started or renewed membership during April 1996.

Nicholas G. Tsoulos, MD

"Magic Mike" Stilwell

Sandi Wagner

Genoa Ward

Freddie Sanchez

Roy & Betty Armstrong

Jeff Marcus

Henry Vaca

Rich Robertson

Fred & Ursula Rohrer

Mary Coley

Eddie Rodriguez

Sigrid O'Brien

Gretchen Krafft

(If you renewed and your name is not listed, please contact Jim Jolly.)

Paul Harris' Twilight Angels

Jim Jolly

This is a "cute" trick. That is how my wife described it. Kelly is my first spectator for any newly purchased trick. Of course, being married to a magician means she's not your average spectator. She knows of the existence of double lifts, gaffed cards, false deals and forces. But she tries to be objective when I preview a new effect on her and for this Paul Harris effect she termed it...cute.

Effect: You display a small mirror that you call an "angel catcher." Then you point out the angels riding bicycles on the back of your deck of cards. You explain the theory that angels are made of pure light and the mirror reflects pure light so you can actually combine them to alter space and time.

As Johnny Carson used to say, "If you buy the premise...you buy the bit." You place the mirror on the back of a "random" card and slowly one of the angels disappears. You reposition the angel catcher and the angel reappears right next to the other angel. You now have two permanent angels on end of the card and a blank space where an angel used to be on the other side. Of course, now everything can be examined.

Paul includes two other effects. Both are quickies although one effect, called "Broken Angels," requires you to tear one of your gaffed cards in half. It does teach you a new sleight that Paul calls the Angel Flick that is a pretty visual change when you get it right. The last effect is called the "Smeared Angel" and is for laymen who wouldn't dream the U.S. Playing Card Company would ever

see ANGELS page 11

DESERT MAGIC from page 1

For everyone who had a chance to see Steve Fearson lecture in San Diego a few years ago, you'll be pleased to know that he seems to be doing well and his lecture for Gary Darwin's magic club was top notch. He can still float a cigarette like nobody else, and he has a neat Card IN ceiling effect. That's right, when the deck comes down, one corner is impaling the ceiling.

The only lecture I missed was Carl Cloutier. I love to watch him work (every year), but this year I just couldn't drag my but out of bed. If anyone else saw the lecture, please let me know what's new since last year's lecture.

Gary Ouelet previewed a couple of new magic specials coming up in May and explained why Lance's dove act was truncated and put to different music on his recent show. T.V. executives basically have a very low estimation of the average television viewer. Really, I found some of his views rather insulting, but he had some useful tips for anyone who ends up performing magic for a television camera.

Max Maven delivered a handful of very cool card tricks. Although Max presents them with a mentalism slant, that is purely presentation. One prediction (using gaffed cards) even seemed to impress hard core card man Roger Klause. Perhaps the most intriguing technique presented to me at the convention was Max's use of the Gilbreath (sic?) principal. I can't pretend to understand why it works, but it is essentially a mathematics fluke which allows you to randomly mix cards (or have a spectator do so) and still know certain information about the talon. Odd, no? One application of the principal allowed a spectator to randomly mix a set of envelopes which were then dealt into two piles. The spectator was

able to pair envelopes from the piles in any order. When all was done, there were matching ESP cards in each pair of envelopes.

But I ramble... All the lectures met or exceeded my expectations. I believe that the Magic and Meaning Panel filled a void in the magic world. It was an open ended discussion of the philosophy of magic. Not everybody's cup of tea, but interesting nonetheless. Jay Sankey must inject caffeine, but his lecture was fun(ny) with some nice material. If anyone is still performing the dollar bill penetration taught by Harkey a few years ago, Jay has an improvement which makes it far more deceptive. See me for the details.

COMPETITIONS

I missed the youth competition due to a scheduling conflict, but by all reports it was the best in a long time. Only two zombies floated across the stage. The competition was so tight that four (rather than the scheduled three) youth acts made it to the finals. The prize was taken by contest veteran Danny Cole. Danny's hip red suit (which magically appears followed by his red gloves, tie, and hat later in the act) and flashy (near flawless) flip stick technique make for an exciting show.

The adult stage competition was a bit weaker than normal (IMHO). For the record, the contestants were: Jim McCafferty, Jason Baney, Enrico de la Vega, James Chandler Brown, The Hamners, Charles and Bobbie Peters, Jason Byrne, Christopher Broughton, Thiet Nguyen, and Taylor Reed & co. The bronze lion head went to The Hamners for their bird act (although an error of Seigfried's gave them the gold for a few minutes), silver went to the creative and amusing illusions of Jim McCafferty, while Jason Byrne easily took the Gold. You might remember Jason from World's Greatest Magic II. Yellow



doves, from everywhere. One problem with this contest seemed to be lack of technical preparation. Acts that I really like (notably Enrico de la Vega and Chris Broughton) while good, didn't use the stage to best advantage. Still, I think that Broughton's touching act deserved to take home one of the prizes.

OTHER BITS...

Paul Stone's eye catching talking head caught me by surprise. Just a head (his) sitting atop a clear cabinet filled with lights and gears and stuff encouraging you to come see the rest of him at his lecture that evening. Mike Finney's farewell feast focused more on his stand-up comedy than on his magic, but it was still a side splitter. Watch for some fire in next months trade rags about Tom Mullica and Thiet Nguyen. Tom, who filled in as M.C. at the last moment, crossed some pretty clear lines regarding tasteful behavior and I bet someone gets their panties in a bunch over it. Poor judgment on Tom's part, but I think that there will be no lasting harm. Thiet Nguyen' performance (I suspect) was the cause for Peter Pit's ongoing bits about the hellish life of a magician's dove. Nguyen's act has caused controversy before. Now that I've seen it, I must say that I too was concerned for the safety and comfort of his animals.

Former Member Lulu Flatt asked me to say hi to her old Ring 76 chums. She is living in Vegas and now published a newsletter called Nightowls. Subscriptions are \$12.00. Give her a call. Your subscription will keep you posted on who's where in Vegas and feature interviews with TOP names. So far she has nabbed interviews with Lance Burton, S&R, David Copperfield, and many more.

If you missed this year's DSM, try to make the 20 year anniversary. Everyone I spoke with had a great time this year.

FIRST MAGIC SHOW from page 2

care how many hundreds of hours you've invested to perfect the faro shuffle or an interlocked card production. They just want to have fun and hopefully be fooled. Just keep the effects simple and make sure one or two of them require a volunteer. Remember that one of your goals in performing this show is to develop confidence that you can *entertain* an audience. Enjoy letting your positive experiences build up instead of putting too much pressure on yourself initially.

You want to get to the point where the mechanics of the tricks themselves become second-nature. Learn the handling and then do it over and over. My tennis coach was big into "muscle training." He explained it wasn't about building big biceps. Rather, by concentrating on hitting a forehand correctly time after time, your brain eventually does not have to consciously think about each individual motion. Your muscles will become "trained" in the right way to do something. So it is with magic. Like the old cliché, the handling of your props must become as natural to you as driving a car. This is true for the "moves" as well as just holding some piece of equipment. For example, you should be able to hold your set of linking rings and pass them from one hand to the other without appearing to give it a second thought. If you handle them stiffly, you will arouse your audience's suspicion and the illusion of real magic will be shattered.

I suggest keeping your first show to 10 or 15 minutes, which is enough time for three to five tricks. I believe you should know almost *exactly* what you will say during each effect. You may disagree with me here but if it's good enough for David Copperfield and Eugene Burger then it's good enough for me. It was a learning experience when I watched a

Copperfield special on TV after seeing his show live a few weeks before. Suffice it to say there were more than a few similarities in the patter used in the two performances. Give some real thought to your words. Please avoid saying, "I have here an ordinary bag" or "Now I am picking up this silk scarf." Refer to Samuel Patrick Smith's books for some great ideas for making up entertaining patter yourself.

Well, those are some of the basics according to Wauson. You'll soon pick up how to use "bits of business" to enhance your performances. Also, as you become more comfortable in magaining you'll be better able to handle a volunteer who pees his pants onstage in front of the 100+ audience, or the mentally handicapped child who starts barking during the show or the birthday kid who holds up his Siberian chain escape and asks if he can come up right away and show everybody his neat trick. Ah, such is the stuff of life!

76 On The Web

Thanks to Sean Keys of Aurora, Ontario in Canada, Ring 76, is now on the World Wide Web. Sean has offered to help the Ring as a pilot program. Featured on the Web is information about Ring 76, I.B.M., the Officers and members of the Ring, and should soon have links to other magic sites on the Web.

Stop by and visit the site at <http://www.websmart.com/ring76/> let us know what you think and what you would suggest for the page. Sean offers Web services for individuals and companies. Contact him at websmrk@name.net.

THE PRESTIDIGITATOR

Carolyn Heck

My dad was no ordinary magician,
but on a par with "Thurston,"
known simply, as the great!

Perfection was his motto, as his
assistant's body, would slowly levitate.
Much to his chagrin, he would cut an
unsuspecting volunteer's tie, quite
nicely half-in-two.

And, when it came to hand manipulation,
the hardest trick of all,
one watched with studied, beady eyes,
so as not to miss the varied-colored
billiard balls.

From multiplying rabbits, to
disappearing silks,
I watched ever so intently as he
did his bag of tricks.

My dad was no ordinary magician,
for he had tricks hidden up his sleeves,
from a fire he set to egg shells,
came a special magic cake.

Now, the daily paper carries more
than just the news,
for when my dad dissected it, ragtime
sang the blues!

My dad was no ordinary magician,
his skill was quite precise,
as he placed face cards in the "magic casket",
the caller's number came up very nice!



BIOGRAPHY of THE PRESTIDIGITATOR

Alton (Al) "Mysterious Heck" disappeared on January 1, 1969 (retired) from his job at the Georgia Power Company in Atlanta, Ga., where he was supervisor of stores accounting, after 46 years of company service.

He practiced magic from the tender age of six while only a boy on a soapbox he could hardly reach in his hometown of Fitzgerald, Ga. Heck was a semi-professional magician for over fifty years. Practically a lifetime.

Attired in black tuxedo, or Chinese-style outfit, on specific occasions, he performed his bag of tricks. His favorite acts included the ever challenging, jingling, jangling, Chinese rings, the production of a bowl of fire (transforming fire into flowers), and slight of hand effects. He gave virtually hundreds of performances in every part of Georgia and elsewhere in the country.

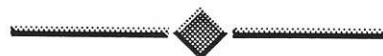
"Mysterious Heck" was a flamboyant soul. His prestidigitation called for flowers, scarves, swords and the fascinating billiard balls. He found a children's audience to be the most enthusiastic participants, always wanting something tangible and edible. Oftentimes, the only answer was conjuring up a magic cake.

Al's greatest magic thrill was executed free of charge when The Atlanta Society of Magicians gave their three charitable benefits a year. He especially enjoyed working with inmates (more) from The Atlanta Federal Penitentiary where they watched spellbound as he performed his magic acts.

My father was in constant demand at parties, conventions and benefits. Perhaps his most unusual feat was that of "magician extraordinary" aboard the jouncing aisles of the old "Nancy Hanks," a train destined for Savannah, Ga. - a long six-hour ride through the Georgia countryside.

Alton was a member and past president of The Atlanta Society of Magicians and belonged to the International Society of Magicians for over nine years. Georgia will long remember him as the "man of many mysteries."

Submitted by: Carolyn Heck



WAR from page 1

the fields. Suddenly, however, the farm blossomed and it was rumored that John Maskelyne had sold his soul for the secrets of black magic for himself and for ten generations to follow.

In the years that followed the Maskelyne family did indeed seem to possess extraordinary powers as they produced a long line of scientists, magicians and men of standing. Nevil Maskelyne, of the third generation was the royal astronomer of King George III and was the first to measure time in tenths of a second and figured the weight of the earth. Peter Maskelyne of the 5th generation was an alchemist and when he died, the burning of his notes in a public bonfire produced flames of unusual colors.

The 8th generation produced a watchmaker, John Neville Maskelyne, considered by many to be the father of modern magic. He created the famed Box Trick, now known as the sub-trunk. He founded The Magic Circle in London, perfected the standard typewriter keyboard and invented Psycho, a mechanical man that played flawless Whist that is on display in the British Museum.

His son, Nevil Maskelyne, carried on the magical tradition and was the featured attraction of "Maskelyne's Magical Mysteries." In WWI, he developed a paste that protected naval gunners' hands from gun flashes and trained magician-spies for T.E. Lawrence in Arabia.

It was 10th generation Jasper Maskelyne, who became known as the war magician. The book is about his achievements while fighting the Germans in WWII.

Already one of London's most celebrated magical performers when the war began in 1939, Jasper Maskelyne put show business aside and began conceiving of

means to adapt the techniques of stage magic to the battlefield. He had a difficult time convincing the military leadership of the value of a trained magician but was eventually assigned to a unique camouflage unit in Egypt.

Jasper quickly learned how to "read" air reconnaissance photographs and applied his stage magic knowledge of coloring, shading, blending, perspective and the use of decoys to fool enemy reconnaissance cameras. He put together a group of misfits with unique talents. A former professor, an ex-thief, a carpenter, a cartoonist, and a bohemian artist made up what was later called "The Magic Gang." Together they fooled enemy observers by making supply trucks look like tanks and tanks look like trucks.

The Magic Gang created fake battle damage so German bombers would go on to the next target. They "moved" Alexandria Harbor, a major British re-supply point that was critical to the forces that eventually kicked Rommel out of Africa.

Maskelyne created entire armies out of shadows, launched a phantom fleet of submarines and even a ghost battleship. A quote from Jasper Maskelyne appears on the back cover, "To me World War II involved something very strange and rather alarming-the focusing of my whole imagination and knowledge on how best to mobilize the world of magic against Hitler..."

The book is very well written in anecdotal form and, while it deals with a lot of known magical effects and mysteries, does not reveal any methods or principles that a layman should not know. The author is either a magician himself or had the very close help of one to write this book. He mentions things like pulls, loads and gaffs

but never explains them in detail.

I particularly enjoyed the section of the book where Jasper was pitted against the Imam of the Whirling Dervish tribe, who was threatening England with a holy war if they violated Dervish territory in Syria. The Imam claimed to possess magic powers and had performed "miracles" through which he maintained leadership over his tribe. It turned out that the Imam had been trained in magic by Jasper's father many years before. Jasper was brought before the Imam and they began a series of tricks trying to better one another until the Arab realized Jasper's biggest threat was in exposing the Imam as a fraud to his people. He quickly and quietly ended the session and agreed to make peace with the British forces in his area. Fisher's description of the impromptu magic show reminded me of stories from late night rooms at a magic convention.

Published by The Berkley Publishing Group in 1983, I don't believe *The War Magician* is in print anymore but should be available at a well-stocked library or it may be found at one of the many used-book stores in San Diego. I am returning the book to my friend with hopes that he'll let me keep it in my magic library. This book covered all my interests; magic, history, military, and people coping with unique and demanding situations. I enjoyed it a great deal and give it an unqualified "thumbs up."

◆

DUES PAST DUE

DID YOU FORGET?

Ring 76 dues were due in April. If you forgot, send your check, \$20 for regular membership - \$10 for out of town to Jim Jolly.

CURTIS from page 3

just wise-guys, sometimes worse. The degree or type of wise-guy can vary. You have to keep in mind a lot of people feel you are challenging them because you can do a trick they cannot do or don't know how it's done. Some people will feel the need to harass you because of this. First off, if you are doing Magic to show people you are smarter than they are you're not doing Magic - you're being a show-off and a wise-guy yourself. You should be *enter-taining them with Magic*. There is a difference.

You can feel out these kind of people during your first couple of opening routines. If they can be "won over" through the use of your personality and comedy you will know. If you can see that nothing you do will make this person happy you should wrap it up and move on. You should not try to keep impressing this person because it is not going to happen and you are only going to make things worse for yourself.

Some simple suggestions to help steer you clear of those kind of tables:

Cruise the restaurant/bar; check out the crowd and various tables -look for potential problems (guys wearing empty beer pitchers on their heads is usually a dead give away)

Sometimes the servers will tip you about a table you may want to stay away from, so it's good to be on friendly terms with them.

Best of all is your own common sense.

Curtis Clark has been performing at restaurants, clubs and conventions for over thirteen years. Curtis performs at RJ's Riptide (5th and K) Sunday, Monday and Tuesday and at the Gathering Thursday and Friday evenings.

<http://www.websmart.com/ring76/>

May Magic in the Air

Lance Burton (repeat) Gallup: Extreme Magic - NBC - May 4th

Rudy Coby: Ridiculously Dangerous - Fox - May 5th - 7 p.m. - your usual straight act - escaping from an 8 foot egg, surviving in a tank of piranhas, making a truck disappear

Champions of Magic - ABC - May 6th - 8 p.m. - Pendragons, Joseph Ganbriel,

Channing Pollack, ... Hidden Secrets of Magic - NBC - May 18th - 9 p.m. - Pendragons, Lance Burton, ...

UPCOMING (but no air dates yet) ...

Lance Burton II (February 97)

Harry Anderson: Tricks of the Trade

World's Greatest Magic III (November 1996)

Gee, I guess magic is getting popular!

But NO Copperfield (maybe the Tornado blew him away - or more likely, he wants a break).

From **Sean Keys** - MagicWeb - Designing magic related web sites

(Our thanks to Sean for this timely information. Contact Sean at websmrk@name.net or visit his Web Site:

<http://www.websmart.com/magic.html>)

"IF I COULD TURN BACK TIME"

David Hira

Stage center is a working clock, the kind with 2 hands, not digital. Stage right is a table with a card star (don't choke.. read on..) that has a card at each of it's five points. Stage left is a table holding an table-top easel with a manila envelope containing a child's puzzle (The cardboard kind that you "dump" the pieces out of.. and fit them back

into the empty cardboard "frame") along with a change bag.

In your pocket, a cigarette lighter and T.T. In your hand, a legal pad and marker.

Also, you need the cassette tape or CD of Cher's "If I could turn back time" hit song.

THE ROUTINE AND EFFECT

(NOTE: The 'snappy patter' presented here is for you to follow along with what is seen by the audience. Please, no e-mail about my "narration of the obvious.." !)

"Let's make note of the time.. let's see, according to the clock it is now 8:00 p.m." (Write "8:00 p.m." in large print on the tablet, tear off the paper, and fold it in fourths.) "YOU, sir, will be the keeper of the time.

Would you please hold this record of the time in your pocket.."

Pull the puzzle from the manila folder that is on the table top easel. "A child's puzzle, with all the pieces forming a picture." Dump the pieces out, and drop them into the change bag. Place the empty puzzle frame back in to the manila folder. Set the change bag down next to the easel.

"A star with a card at each of the five points.." Remove the cards one at a time, and place them in your pants pocket.

"And lastly, is there a gentleman with a pocket handkerchief I could borrow.." Have the gentleman come up on stage, stand far stage left. Take his handkerchief by the center, and burn the handkerchief with the lighter. Fold up the handkerchief and have him place it in his breast pocket, peeking out a bit for all to see.

"Ladies... and gentlemen. Let's recap. We recorded the time on a piece of paper before we started



this experiment, that this gentleman holds on his person. Here.. a puzzle board (pull the empty frame from the envelope and then replace it) that we have removed the pieces from (pull a few pieces from the change bag and put back in the bag).

"We've taken the cards from the star" Gesture to the star, and show the cards in your pants pocket. "And, the gentlemen's handkerchief? Ruined by fire."

"I heard Cher sing a song call 'If I could turn back time' and wondered. What if, as a magician, I could really turn back time. An interesting idea indeed!"

The music starts.. loudly and lively. You approach the clock on the table which now reads 8:05. Dramatically, with the music playing, you grab the minute hand and pull it back to 7:58.. a few minutes PRIOR to when you began the experiment. As you pass the 8:00 mark, the lights flicker, perhaps some flashpots go off.

INSTANTLY the cards appear back on the star! You pull your pants pocket inside out.. THE CARDS ARE GONE! (Just as it was BEFORE 8:00 when you began!)

"The gentleman with the paper with the recorded time.." Retrieve the folded paper from him, and unfold it. IT'S BLANK! "Just as it was BEFORE we began!"

"The puzzle?" Show the change bag.. it's EMPTY! Pull out the puzzle frame from the envelope.. ALL THE PIECES ARE BACK IN PLACE! (Just as they were before you began!)

"Is there a gentleman.." as you slowly grin and turn to the man on stage left, "That would lend me his handkerchief?" Nod to him to remove his handkerchief. Have HIM open it.. it is as if it was never burned...

Successful at "turning back time", you take your bow..

I hope that you enjoy this routine. Please let me know if you put it together and have success with it. The methods should all be obvious, but feel free to e-mail me should you have any questions or comments for improvement!

David Hira
Dallas Texas
DHMAGIC1@aol.com

(Our thanks to David for allowing us to reprint his EG post in *MagiCurents*)

ANGELS from page 6

make a playing card with two angels on one end.

In my humble opinion, Twilight Angels lives and dies with the presentation (the same can be said for most magic effects). As a puzzle it's not hard to replay the events in your mind of what just happened and figure out some solutions. So the key to making this effect work is in telling the story about angels in a believable setting. Bruce Cervon and Joel Bauer wouldn't get away with this trick. Eugene Burger would.

Most of Paul Harris' stuff is very powerful and usually difficult for me and while this is an easy effect to do it will take some theater to pull it off well. The cost was \$15 and included two gaffed cards and the mirror. The instructions are very clear with good illustrations. I could see this trick, presented at the end of a series of metaphysical miracles, with that look in your eyes that says there are mysteries that exist that can't be explained by the known senses. You give that card to the amazed spectator and you'll have a new disciple for your cult. Rick, you'd like this one.

1996 Desert Magic Seminar

Max Mavin Lecture

Gary Salisbury

According to Webster, "max" is the greatest quantity or value attainable, an upper limit and a "ma-vin" is one who is experienced or knowledgeable, an expert. However, when Webster's definition is applied to Max Mavin, it is an understatement! He is beyond the "greatest knowledge" and well beyond an "upper limit expert." He is nothing short of pure brilliance as his lecture at the 1996 Desert Magic Seminar demonstrated!

It was standing room only as Max presented his first lecture west of the Mississippi in ten years and it was as if he saved all his energy and creativity for this single event. He demonstrated seven of his own effects: PSI Con-Ruse, Mockingbird, Changeling, Zenvelopes, Numberskull, Designated Thinker, and Strung-Out.

In his Mockingbird effect, Max demonstrated a little known card principle known as the "Gilbreath principle", one that mystified myself and had the audience talking about for the remainder of the seminar. There were magicians in the hallways, in the dealer's room, in the coffee shop, and even in the hotel check-out line discussing it.

At the end of his lecture he received a standing ovation from the audience and as expected, his lecture notes and effects were quickly sold out. If you ever have the opportunity to see Max Mavin lecture, please don't miss it and hopefully you won't have to wait another 10 years.



At The Shops

The Magic Shop Hours: Sun-Sat
849 W. Harbor Drive 10:00-9:00
San Diego, CA
(619) 236-1556

Mary says, Rocco's D'Rose is in and they have been very busy. Mary has a Web site now (we will get the page address for you next month)

Brad Burt's Hours: M-T 10:00-6:00
4690 Convoy Friday 10:00-8:00
San Diego, CA Sat: 10-5:30, Sun: 12-4
(619) 571-4749

The baby has arrived! Barbara, baby, brother and Burt are doing just fine! Our congratulations to the happy family.

At The Castle

(All shows subject to change. Information based on best available at press time. Call the Magic Castle for up to date information.)

APR 29 - MAY 5

E. CLOSE-UP:

L. CLOSE-UP:

E. PARLOUR:

L. PARLOUR:

PALACE:

Barry Price
Mike Battistoni
Jonathan Neal
Howard Jay
Aldo Colombini
Dana Daniels
Chris Broughton

MAY 6 - 12

E. CLOSE-UP:

L. CLOSE-UP:

E. PARLOUR:

L. PARLOUR:

PALACE:

Celeste
Joe Monti
Bob Dorian
Mike Elkan
David Avadon
John Carney
Jade

MAY 13 - 19

E. CLOSE-UP:

L. CLOSE-UP:

E. PARLOUR:

L. PARLOUR:

PALACE:

Marvyn Roy
Fenik
Jason Tong
Loren Michaels
Chuck Fayne
Dale Hindman
Jason Byrne

At The Ring

(The following are the upcoming Ring Meeting nights. Ring 76 is currently searching for a permanent meeting location and locations are subject to change. MagiCurrents will announce the planned meeting location in each newsletter.)

MAY 13 - T.C. Tahoe Lecture

This is the lecture we have all be waiting for. Meeting is at no cost for all paid Ring 76 members.

MAY 27 - Board Meeting

JUNE 10 - Election Night

The election of the officers and directors of Ring 76. Come out and vote.

JUNE 24 - Board Meeting

JULY 8 - Ring 76 Installation Banquet for 1996-97

Location to be determined. Date is subject to change.

JULY 22 - Board Meeting

AUGUST 12- New 76 Board

First Meeting of the 1996-97 year with the new officers of Ring 76.

NEXT MEETING

T.C. Tahoe Lecture

• • •
May 13, 1996
6:30 PM

• • •
Francis Parker School
6501 Linda Vista Rd
San Diego, CA



MagiCurrents
4046 Caminito Terviso
San Diego, CA 92122-1993

FREE!
For Paid Members

Roy & Betty Armstrong

2548 Littleton Road
El Cajon, CA 92020

